

# Miami Correctional Facility to Host its First Prison Mini-Relay

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Commissioner J. David Donahue

BUNKER HILL, Ind. - (April 12, 2007) - The Miami Correctional Facility will host the first Prison Mini-Relay in the Nation on Saturday, April 21, 2007. Sponsoring the first Mini-Relay are the offenders from the facility's Purposeful Living Units Serve (PLUS) unit.

The PLUS unit provides an opportunity for offenders to explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through an emphasis on spiritual moral and character development, life-skills training, and intentional preparation for living as law-abiding citizens who contribute to the well-being of their community.

"The PLUS Units throughout the state have provided the Indiana Department of Correction with a resource to donate money and services to many charitable organizations such as the American Cancer Society. It also has given the offenders within the programs the opportunity to become compassionate and understanding of the needs of others," said Commissioner J. David Donahue. "This is a win-win situation for everyone, but for the offenders, it's a character-building exercise."

A Community Service component is built into the PLUS curriculum to teach the offenders the importance of giving back to their community. It also allows them to demonstrate a willingness to right the wrongs that their criminal behavior has brought upon the community. The offenders are required to perform more than 300 hours of community service during the 16-month program.

The opportunity to participate and to donate to the American Cancer Society has been extended to the entire offender population at Miami Correctional Facility. Offenders also can send letters to family and friends asking for donations. These donations are being made on-line at [www.acsevents.org/relay/in/miami/plus](http://www.acsevents.org/relay/in/miami/plus). The offender's donation will give them the opportunity to walk in the Mini-Relay event. Luminaries will be produced by the PLUS Unit offenders "In Memory" or "In Honor" of a loved one

who has passed or who has survived cancer.

Relay for Life is the American Cancer Society's signature activity, and is the largest non-profit fundraising event in the world. It involves the whole community: schools, businesses, churches, clubs, and families - young and old. Relay for Life is usually an overnight event, but the Mini-Relay is designed to be done on a smaller scale. The Mini-Relay will be an all-day event complete with music supplied by Karaoke Fantasies and DJ services with Lester Jeffries, refreshments from Kroger, and decorations and posters made by the PLUS offenders. All money raised by the PLUS Unit will be donated to the American Cancer Society.

"Relay is such a unique event and this is the first time that we know of that it has taken place at a correctional facility. We felt that this was an amazing opportunity for the offenders to pay tribute to loved ones affected by cancer as well as give back to the community," said Angie Reinhardt, community representative, American Cancer Society. "Most of all it is a great and empowering way to make a difference in the fight against cancer."

Miami Correctional Facility has had a team of employees who have participated in the actual Miami County Relay for Life for the past two years. This year, they have partnered with the PLUS Unit in trying to raise even more money for ACS. This event also has served as an educational opportunity and been utilized in another part of the PLUS curriculum - The Healthy Living portion. The offenders are learning about how to avoid the disease and are sharing their information through posters that will be displayed along the walking route during the event.

According to MCF Superintendent Walter Martin, "This is a great opportunity for the offenders to make an impact in the community and to possibly even help their own loved ones. This is a terrible disease that affects many people no matter what their age, race, gender, religion, or financial status. We are excited to host this event."

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#### **About The Department of Correction**

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.